

# Elements of Drama

## Part 1

# Acts

- Acts are the major divisions in a dramatic work
- In performance, the end of an act is often signaled by the lowering of the curtain
- Modern plays tend to have 1-3 acts
- Older plays tend to 4-5 acts (Shakespeare always had 5)

# Scenes

- Scenes are smaller divisions within acts
- There is no minimum or maximum when it comes to the number of scenes
- A common way to reference a specific location in a play is by listing the act.scene.line
- Example: 1.5.34
  - Act I, Scene 5, Line 34

# Stage Directions

- Instructions by a playwright to the actors and director that tell how to stage and perform a play
- At the beginning of the play as the “setting”—describes the set
- Peppered throughout text to inform character action, set movement, etc.

# Cast of Characters

- A list that tells who is in the play
- Lists all characters, including extras
- May also, briefly describe the characters
- Unnamed Extras are always listed in order of appearance

# Chorus

- A group of actors who speak together with one voice and describe and comment on the main action of the play
- Sometimes, as in *Romeo and Juliet* the Chorus can be a single person